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SUBJECT: ESTONIA: GOALS FOR AFGHANISTAN AT JANUARY 26
INFORMAL NATO FOREIGN MINISTERIAL

REF: SECSTATE 4834

Classified By: CDA Jeff Goldstein for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) On January 20, Acting DCM and Pol/Econ Chief delivered reftel points on goals for Afghanistan at the January 26 informal Foreign Ministerial to Arti Hilpus, MFA Director for Security Policy and Arms Control. Hilpus welcomed the information about the meeting, expressed regret that Foreign Minister Paet will not be able to attend, because of a previously planned trip to China, and noted that Harri Tiido, Estonia's Ambassador to NATO will attend the meeting in Brussels on the 26th.

¶2. (C) With respect to increasing military commitments, Hilpus emphasized that Estonia is "at its max" and that an increase in Estonia's contributions is unlikely in the foreseeable future. (Note: Estonia increased its troop contributions in Afghanistan to 130 at the end of 2006. End Note.) Aside from having troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia and Kosovo, Estonia is also obligated to contribute resources to a Joint Baltic Battalion and an EU Battle Group. Hilpus also reaffirmed that Estonia does not have caveats on its forces participating in ISAF and so has "nothing to lift". ADCM noted that Estonia can help by urging other Allies to follow its example in this regard.

¶3. (C) On the civilian side, Hilpus reaffirmed that Estonia has had a diplomat posted in Helmand province since September 2006, who coordinates the GOE's development assistance program and serves as Charge in Kabul. Estonia began providing development assistance to Afghanistan in 2006, spending about USD 75,000 on medical equipment. In 2007, the GOE will spend about USD 125,000. In March, the GOE plans to send a second civilian to serve as an advisor to Afghanistan's Ministry of Defense. Estonia also will contribute a police officer to a planned European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) police training mission in Afghanistan.

¶4. (C) Hilpus emphasized the need for greater NATO-EU coordination and comprehensive planning. He noted that Estonia's representative at the January 26 Ministerial will raise this issue.

GOLDSTEIN